

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

Neither Washington nor Moscow

★ Gorbachev:
crisis in East



But

DESPITE ALL the public relations gimmicks at last month's Moscow summit, the world order is facing deep crisis.

While Gorbachev and Reagan exchanged feeble jokes in endless press conferences, their wives traded insults in art galleries and museums.

Nothing of substance was agreed—the whole exercise was merely designed to enhance the prestige of each side as their problems mount.

In the East, Gorbachev and other state capitalists are confronted with growing disaffection from Polish, Hungarian and Czechoslovak workers.

In Armenia, Estonia and Kazakstan national minorities tolerate sullenly—or increasingly demonstrate against—Russian rule.

Most important, Russia has been effectively driven out of its imperialist occupation of Afghanistan by continued resistance by Afghan rebels. This is the most serious defeat for a super-power since the USA lost the Vietnam war.

As the states of Eastern Europe introduce “market

reforms” in an attempt to rejuvenate their flagging economies, western politicians gloat. They claim it demonstrates the superiority of the “free market” system.

Before they crow too loudly, the western free-marketeers, too, should read the writing on the wall.

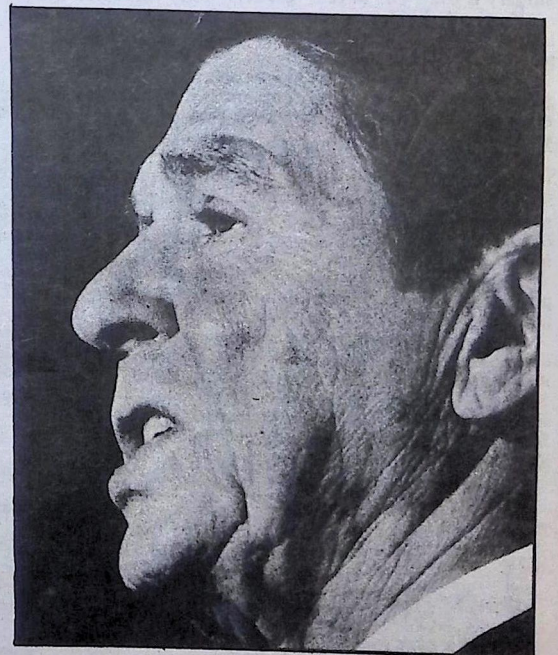
Since the stock market crash of last October, the shaky nature of the western economies has been exposed.

In the US, the largest Texan bank is now bust, kept afloat only by state guarantees. As interest rates rise, due to the large US budget and trade deficits, the right wing economists are warning of a new and frightening financial crisis brewing.

Add to that the increasing signs of recession in the US economy, the enormous levels of unemployment throughout the West and it is clear that free market capitalism is as precarious as state capitalism in the East.

East and West, the hope lies with workers' resistance. That is why Socialist Worker says neither Washington nor Moscow but International Socialism.

★ Reagan:
crisis in West



International Socialism

Irish bosses compare notes



Haughey and Smurfit

LAST MONTH captains of Irish capital lectured each other about Productivity, increased efficiency etc. at their recent annual banquet, the Irish Management Institute Conference at Killarney.

The IMI conference is attended annually by our top businessmen, bankers, insurance swindlers and every other assortment of fraud you can imagine. About 400 of them. They are Ireland's rich and powerful. Mercs, BMWs and Porsches all gathered together in the lush surroundings of Killarney's Europe and Great Southern Hotels to tell the rest of us what we are doing wrong and how to put it to rights.

The Chief Executive of Telecom Eireann, Fergus McGovern, told us that the answer is "flexibility" and the rationalisation of grades in the workplace leading to "the elimination of class barriers". Telecom has been so successful with this "new" technique that already 25% of their workers' jobs have disappeared forever and there's a good 10% more to come. Thank you, Mr. McGovern!

Heinz Beanz man, Tony O'Reilly, complained that not enough taxpayer's money was being given to himself so that he could make more overseas investments. It will not create more jobs, mind you, but "the hard-pressed tax-payer will share the rewards". Follow Tony and you'll all get rich quick.

Listen to Michael Smurfit, the multi millionaire Cardboard Man, reporting on his latest acquisition abroad. "You move into a company. You stand down (sack) 1,000 people at the Head Office in ten days, 90% of the total. Result—chaos. Right?—Wrong! We had to do that in the CEA takeover. If there is surgery to be done—do it quickly and in one go. Otherwise (wait for it) you will suffer as your staff will be insecure and poor morale will develop. However, once the surgery is over, you have to get everybody turned on again".

He concluded by saying that, for Smurfits, "there has never been an easier time than now". What a bloke eh? Your top man has spoken. Rest assured.

The Chief Lemming, C Haughey, finally addressed his generals. "The business environment is now more favourable etc. etc. . . you will have to get it right . . . just like Tony and Michael etc. etc. . ."

And indeed the Boss had much to celebrate at Killarney. He is now half way down the road to converting every Public Service into a private business for all his pals to share. By next year only the rich will be allowed to get sick and go to Blackrock Clinic. Only the rich will have access to an education in this country.

Nobody mentioned the appalling unemployment and poverty that exists nationwide or the likelihood of a penny investment in local jobs. Cheers Charlie!

A message was sent to the conference based on a survey carried out by the Youth Information and Advice Centre in Waterford. "Would the Taoiseach and his generals do something to 'instil hope' in young people, given that 94% of Waterford's students plan to emigrate if they cannot find jobs. That 81% feel they have no chance of a job in this country. That 63% of all students have relatives living abroad."

Our message is simple. Scrap the whole damned lot of them.

—JOXER

IRELAND'S PERMANENT REVOLUTION

For 300 years it has been the 'Irish problem'. Labour and Tory, reformists and hard-liners, the soft hand of parliament and the mailed fist of the army — all have failed to solve it. This book argues for a socialist solution.

£3.50 inc. post from SW Books PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

by Chris Bambery

Free the Guildford Four

THREE Irish men, Paul Hill, Patrick Armstrong and Gerry Conlon and an English woman, Carole Richardson, have now served 14 years of a life sentence for the 1974 Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings.

They were wrongly convicted in the emotional atmosphere of the time, following IRA bombing campaigns in Britain during 1973-74.

Men captured a year later at the Balcombe Street Siege made statements immediately to the police that they were the members of the IRA "active service unit" which had carried out these bombings; they claimed that

EVIDENCE

the Guildford Four had no connection whatsoever with these events and that they did not know the four. Despite this crucial evidence, the Guildford Four's request for

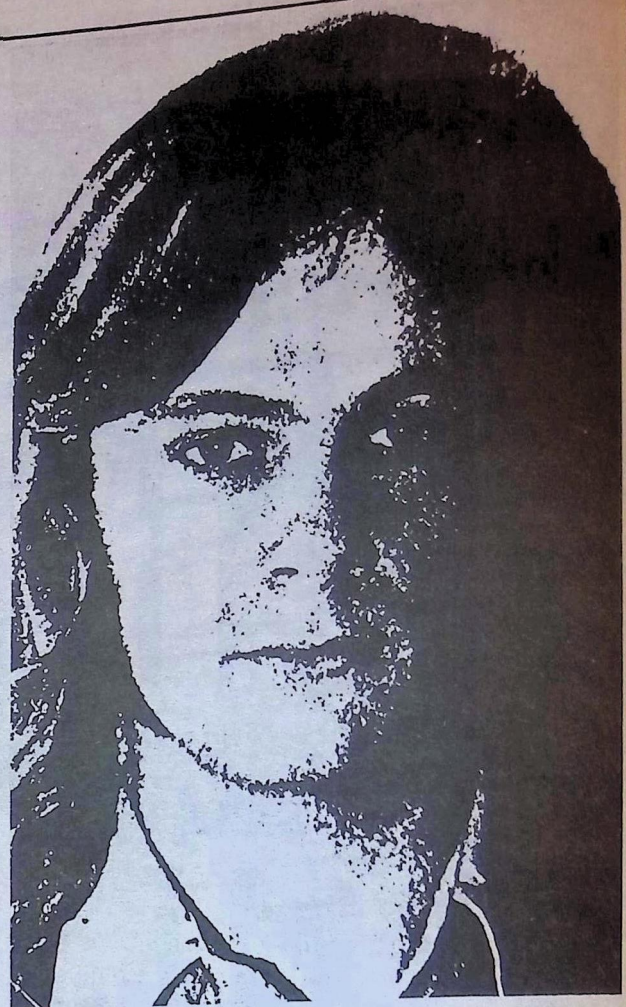
a retrial was rejected by the no-jury Court of Appeal in 1977.

The Guildford Four were convicted solely on the basis of uncorroborated confessions—confessions which they later retracted. They testified in court that the statements were false and were only made in order to relieve the enormous pressure and anxiety created during the prolonged and "intensive interrogation". This had been conducted in an atmosphere of physical assaults, threats both to the Four and their families, and sleep deprivation.

The Four were held under the PTA—enacted only days beforehand. They were denied access to any legal advice before they signed the statements. Nor were they able to see any family or friends.

So why then have the Irish Government done absolutely nothing to help acquire the release of the Guildford Four when everybody knows they are innocent?

The reason is the Extradition Act. This is such an important issue to both the Irish and British governments



Paul Hill

that they are willing to leave the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six and countless others in prison in order to avoid the enormous embarrassment of freeing wrongly convicted people. Since the failure of the

Birmingham Six appeal there is a firmly held conviction that there is no real justice in the British Legal system—therefore the only answer to the plight of the Guildford Four is their immediate release.

Fight anti-gay prejudice

DAVID NORRIS, well known gay rights campaigner, is challenging the Irish law making homosexuality illegal, through the courts.

The main argument his legal team rests on is that the law as it stands is in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The legal process is slow and will take years. A result in his favour would be a welcome condemnation of reactionary legislation, and one in the eye for religious bigots; but it's doubtful if it would change the lives of most gay men and women in any meaningful way.

Anti gay feeling is deep and widespread in Ireland. Unofficial gains made by lesbians and gay men over the last 20 years are under attack. "Queer-bashing", discrimination at work, and social ostracism are on the increase. Even yesterdays' liberals distance themselves in today's politically conservative climate.

Much of the blame lies with the hype of AIDS as the "gay plague". Victims of the disease were blamed for causing it. Lies and half-truths about how the disease is spread led to near panic.

Those really to blame, the world's governments, whose

criminal neglect and under-funding of research and prevention programmes, were let off the hook. Instead of frank thorough going education about safe sex, no sex became the emphasis: or at least only the straight monogomous kind. AIDS became a stick to beat all "deviants" with.

Even in our universities, supposed centres of free expression, the situation with regard to gay rights is shameful. Of the national universities in the South, only Trinity has a recognised Gay Society. Gay Soc's in Dublin, Cork and Galway universities have been supported by the Students Union, but consistently frustrated in their efforts to keep going by the college authorities who refuse to ratify them denying access to the student capitation fund.

VETOED

Last October in Maynooth, 176 people joined the newly formed Gay Soc. With 10 per cent of the college population it represented one of the largest college societies in the country. Yet the college authorities vetoed it. It would have been a source of embarrassment to them, they said. The small regional colleges in rural areas are even

worse off.

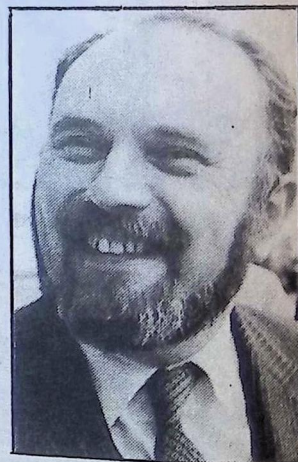
But all is not doom, gloom and Alice Glenn. Activists do maintain links through gay publications, telephone switch boards, and regular group meetings though most of these venues are in the major cities, not the smaller towns.

OUT magazine is published bi-monthly on a non-profit basis, and commits itself to the growth of gay consciousness. (Tel. 01-771507). It contains listings for all major lesbian and gay groups and helplines. Gay Health Action have done sterling work in providing information on safe sex, an AIDS Helpline, and support for persons who are HIV+.

Very welcome is the newly formed Lesbian and Gay Rights at Work (LGRW) group, an informal network of trade unionists who fight on workplace issues. They are now producing a quarterly newsletter—copies from LGRW, PO Box 1890, Sherrif St. or phone 788848.

In 1982 the ICTU passed a resolution condemning anti-gay bias and encouraging all affiliated unions to adopt the ICTU guidelines on the issue. LGRW seeks to promote awareness of this and garner support from the unions at every level, and in the workplace.

Understanding that the fight against gay oppression in particular, has to relate to workers' struggles in general, is of paramount importance. And such a perspective is not pie-in-the-sky. Gay and Lesbian groups supported the miners' strike in Britain '84-85. In a gesture of solidarity



David Norris

returned, a contingent of Yorkshire miners with their union banner led the Gay Rights march in 1985 in London. No doubt this made it easier for gay miners to come out and helped challenge the anti-gay prejudice of many "macho" trade unionists.

Gay oppression is a class issue. Accepted studies indicate 10 per cent of the population is mainly gay in their sexual orientation. Since the working class are the majority, most gays are therefore workers.

Capitalism has always used the differences between workers to divide and rule us—white v black, women v men, gay v straight, catholics v protestants. Only the bosses gain when workers are divided, therefore it's in the real interests of workers to support all struggle against oppression, including the oppression of gays.

It is the duty of all socialist to point this out and to defend gay and lesbian rights at every opportunity.

WE THINK

HAUGHEY'S SUCCESS THE LEFT'S FAILURE



RECENT OPINIONS indicate that Fianna Fail is recovering its popularity. It has won back many of its rich backers as the Progressive Democrats look set to decline.

But there has also been a rise in working class support for Fianna Fail. When they first embarked on the cuts, FF lost almost a third of its working class electorate.

Now over 40% of workers have again indicated that they would vote for Fianna Fail.

How do socialists explain this bleak situation?

Fianna Fail are getting the benefit of the "Thatcher factor". The harsh right wing medicine is seen as inevitable. Like Thatcher, the Green Tories proclaim "There is no other way".

In a sense they have a point. Within a capitalist framework, cuts and emigration are an absolute necessity. The problem is that the Left parties have also accepted this framework and so cannot provide a real alternative.

The Irish Labour Party gave an example of how to start the cuts. Now the argument that Spring and Desmond have with Haughey is whether the cuts are being unplanned or whether the "burden is shared equally".

The Workers Party also, accept the need to pay back the colossal national debt. In a recent policy document "Planning for Prosperity", they stated that the foreign component of the debt would have to be paid back, if our exports were to be preserved.

Put simply, then the reformist left is on the ideological defensive. They pose as an alternative more planning, more state enterprise—but accept the ground rules of the system.

Everywhere reformist governments have come to power, they have been forced to retreat

before pressure of the international market.

One of Haughey's best friends on the world stage is Bob Hawke, the leader of the Australian Labor Party who visited him recently. Hawke has slashed social security, made a building workers union illegal and has won the praise of the rich of Australia for his toughness. With alternatives like this, no wonder right wing ideas are on the ascendant on a world scale.

The Fianna Fail government have an advantage over Thatcher however. In Britain sections of the ruling class are worried that her policies are tearing apart the "national consensus". In Ireland, Fianna Fail has won unprecedented collaboration from the trade union leaders for their programme. The absolute weakness of reformist politics in a poor capitalist state like Southern Ireland is shown in the collapse of the union leadership before Fianna Fail.

REDUNDANCIES

Typical of this collaboration was the "guarded welcome" given by the ICTU to a recent report on the Programme for National Recovery, that the job creation program was on "target". No mention here of the fact that 27,000 redundancies were notified in 1987 and an estimated 30,000 in 1988. And that's not even mentioning emigration.

When Haughey first concluded his agreement with the union leaders, he was slated by the PDs and Fine Gael. But in terms of ruling class politics they are only trotting after him. The programme for National Recovery is the single most important factor in sabotaging resistance to the cuts. In no other country has an openly right wing government won a 3 years promise of co-operation from the union

leaders. And whatever the intention of the union leaders, the National Plan is encouraging the drift to the right. The passive acceptance of cuts provides the greatest seedbed for the acceptance of the "inevitability" of right wing ideas. It is only when workers are in struggle that they can break from the notions of the Right.

There is one other factor that has played a useful role for Haughey. The recent crisis in Anglo-Irish relations gave him the opportunity to play the role of standing up to Thatcher. The reformist left was completely disarmed.

Historically it has been for even more concessions to loyalism and imperialism. Workers Party leader, De Rossa, was for example, reduced to lamenting the "grave misunderstanding between our two islands".

Tragically, Sinn Fein and the Anti-Extradition campaign have allowed FF to get away with their token opposition to British imperialism. They have fostered the illusion that the grassroots of FF can be won over to a real fight against the border.

The rise of FF in the polls and the real prospect of their return to a majority government, shows the bankruptcy of the politics of the major left parties in Ireland.

Now more than ever a revolutionary socialist alternative must be built. This is one which can argue why workers should not accept any cuts because it views capitalism itself as a failure: that can organise real and serious opposition to the collaboration of the union leaders with FF, and that stands full square for a fight to withdraw the British army and destroy the Orange state—without making concessions to FF's nationalism.

SWM will discuss with any organisation or individuals how we can build such a strong revolutionary socialist organisation.

In the meantime we urge everyone in agreement with us to join the SWM.

KILKENNY: TU jobless snub

ON SATURDAY, 28th May, the Kilkenny Unemployed Action Association, held a protest against Jobsearch at the local Town Hall.

People stopped in the High Street to see what was happening. The protesters held placards in their hands and shouted slogans attacking Jobsearch.

During the protest, it came to the notice of the Secretary of the UAA, that both the Kilkenny Council of Trade Unions and the Centre for the Unemployed were boycotting the protest.

This information came to light when Martin Satelle (Secretary, UAA) asked Tony Ayton (Secretary Trade Council), why the Trade Council and the Unemployment Centre were not participating in the protest, given the fact that they both invited.

Tony Ayton replied that both the Trade Council and the Unemployment Centre would not support the protest because the UAA have done detrimental things to them in the past. When asked why he himself was there he refused to comment.

When Martin Satelle spoke later at the protest he made it known to all those there, the Trade Council's refusal to support the protest. Tony Ayton tried to intervene, demanding to be allowed to speak. He tried to grab the megaphone. Failing to do so, he began shouting at the top of his voice referring to freedom of speech and the disunity of the left. Ayton's rant did not last long for the protesters began shouting about the Jobsearch farce.

When Tony Ayton referred to the UAA being detrimental to the

Trades Council and the Unemployed Centre, he was referring to a previous dispute over the opening of the Unemployed Centre.

On that day the UAA refused to have anything to do with the invitations given to right-wing politicians to attend the opening. A protest letter was handed in instead.

Since that disagreement Tony Ayton has used his position to try and isolate the UAA. Within a week of the refusal of the UAA to have any truck with the rightwing politicians the following incidents took place.

1. The Special Branch went to the home of a member of the UAA. This person is also an employee of the centre.
2. Two members of the UAA, employees of the centre, were put under strong pressure to resign from the UAA.
3. An attempt was made to ban the Secretary of the UAA from using the centre.
4. A special Trades Council meeting was called on May 5th, to discuss the involvement of the UAA on the Management Committee of the Board for the centre. The idea was to remove the UAA from the Management Board.

These are just a few of the incidents that have happened since May 2nd. There are strong rumours that the pressure on the UAA will continue and testify intensify.

We call on the Trade Council to come out and support the working class in Kilkenny and end the sell-outs. Failure to do so can only mean the worsening of conditions for the working class in this area.

KILKENNY SWM

SECTION 31

NUJ ducks RTE gag

THE CASE of Jenny McGeever, RTE journalist, sacked for ignoring the censorship imposed by Section 31, will be reviewed in the High Court this month.

Although McGeever was acting in accordance with official NUI policy towards Section 31, the RTE Broadcasting Branch to which she belongs declared that it would not support her case as an issue of press freedom. Her decision to take it to the Court lets the NUI branch off the hook.

In the Dail, a majority of Labour's 12 TDs supported the retention of Section 31, when the issue was raised by threatened NUI action.

Deputy Leader Barry Desmond reassured the government that it would not offer any opposition. He declared that Labour had supported the retention of Section 31 in Government, and would continue to do so. On the Right, Mr Haughey is conspicuously silent on his election promise that Section 31 would be reviewed. The consistency of Fianna Fail opposition to Section 31, on which he congratulated himself before becoming Taoiseach, is no longer apparent. The McGeever case will



Jenny McGeever

act as further incentive to RTE producer and Workers Party supporter Eoghan Harris. Incredibly he has

argued that the main problem in RTE is the subversive intentions of journalists who sympathise

with Sinn Fein's case.

These journalists are afflicted by a disease of professionalism, he claims, which makes them search rationally for facts. Harris reckons the public doesn't want to know the facts, only emotional responses—such as how they feel about children being killed by bombs in the North.

The witchhunt atmosphere in RTE has meant that Sinn Fein members have been banned from such topics as growing wild mushrooms (Liveline) or emigration (Gay Byrne Show).

A formal complaint made to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission, on the grounds that this censorship violates Section 18 of the Broadcasting Act, which instructs the station to be fair, objective and impartial in dealing with all interests was dismissed.

Socialists in RTE need however to work for industrial action against Section 31. This can best be done by linking up with those workers—such as the telephonists—who are fighting against cutbacks. Only by showing that collusion with Section 31 weakens trade union organisation can RTE workers be won over.

Union leader gagged on North

by EAMONN McCANN

THE GAGGING last month of John Mitchell, general secretary of the Irish Administrative and Distributive Trade Union (IDATU), is the latest example of the refusal of the trade union leaderships to face up to the politics of the Northern issue.

Rank and file trade unionists should condemn this cowardice and stand by Mitchell.

Mitchell was disciplined by the IDATU national executive, for allegedly hiring out union premises for a Sinn Fein meeting. But in fact there was much more to it than that.

Mitchell's real "crime" is that over the past couple of years has repeatedly embarrassed the ICTU bosses by speaking out about the North—and about the trade union movement's appalling record on the North.

This made Mitchell, and IDATU, deeply unpopular with other union leaderships. And this, in turn, upset leading members of IDATU itself who missed the old buddy-buddy relationship they used to have with other bureaucrats before Mitchell alienated them.

INTERVIEWED

The executive's unease about Mitchell goes back at least to January last year when he lashed out at trade unions in the North in an interview in *Andersontown News*.

In the interview Mitchell referred to a "trade union mafia" in the North and said it was understandable that many Northern workers were hostile to the unions, given the way

the unions had failed them over the years.

At leadership level the unions in the North have been a long-standing disgrace. The unions have never campaigned in the workplaces for and to sectarian discrimination—and as a result have actually deepened sectarianism by leaving the impression that it would be impossible to get Protestant workers to support equal treatment for Catholics.

The unions in the North are closely tied into the State. More than eighty per cent of the income of the Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU comes from the Northern Ireland Office.

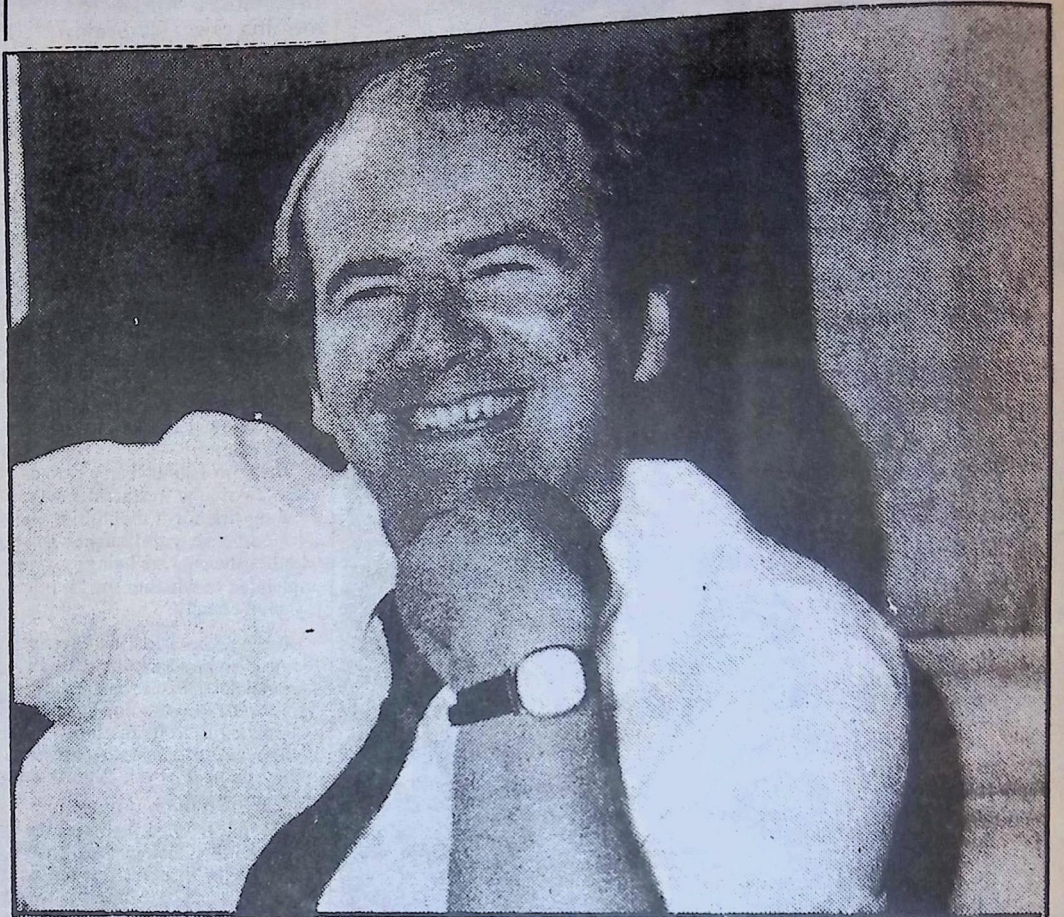
LAP-DOG

The wages of three of NICTU's five full-timers are paid by the NIO. That's one of the facts underlying the lap-dog loyalty of NICTU to whatever regime is running the North.

NICTU didn't think it appropriate to condemn internment or Bloody Sunday or RUC torture but does think it appropriate to condemn the MacBride Principles! Bluntly, NICTU is in Tom King's pocket.

This state of affairs is fully accepted by the ICTU leadership in Dublin, and by the individual leaderships of all the ICTU unions, despite the fact that many of these unions—the ITGWU, for example—have policies (on paper) opposing the Northern State and the repression and sectarianism which characterise it.

Indeed, it is a striking fact that



John Mitchell, gagged by his union.

after twenty years of violence and political mayhem in the North the only time it became a "live" issue with the trade union movement was when somebody complained publicly about union inaction!

The ICTU suspended IDATU from membership and expelled Mitchell from its executive when he refused to apologise for the interview. Not one other union or union leader condemned this despicable move.

Among those who sat tight and said nothing were Inez McCormack and Phil Flynn.

Although IDATU's annual conference backed Mitchell, a majority of the union's full-time officials and of the national executive wanted to distance themselves from the "difficult" Northern issue and to heal the breach with the ICTU. Many missed the junkets and the prestigious positions that can come with membership of the ICTU. Others are just genuine right-wingers.

They got their chance when Mitchell allowed the O'Lehane Hall at the union's head offices to be used for an anti-extradition meeting on April 21st which turned out to be, effectively, a meeting of Sinn Fein.

Mitchell was suspended from duty and reinstated on May 16th only after he agreed to eleven conditions. These include that he will make no further statements about the North and that all recruitment in the North will cease.

These are outrageous and thoroughly reactionary conditions. They mean that Mitchell is debarred even from publicly stating official IDATU policy—on strip-searching for example. The decision to cease recruiting in the North is even more disgraceful.

IDATU has at most only a couple of hundred members in the North but over the last few months has been making a considerable

effort to organise previously non-union areas. In particular, union activists in Belfast and Derry have been recruiting ACE workers and workers on youth training schemes—areas which had been virtually ignored by unions longer established in these localities.

In view of the appalling pay workers receive, IDATU had been offering a 50 pence a week subscription. Part-time organisers in jobs in Belfast and Derry had been advertised and interviews with applications concluded.

DITCHED

Now, as a result of the IDATU executive's decision, they have been ditched. (In a twisted way, this is confirmation of Mitchell's January '87 statement which sparked off the controversy—that the unions have failed the workers who need them most.)

The IDATU executive wants to rejoin the ICTU consensus which holds that the unions should say nothing about the North and which tries to isolate anyone who insists on raising Northern issues as a "troublemaker" or "maverick" or "Trot".

But by avoiding the issue the unions have in effect, handed it over to conservatives of both green and orange varieties.

Moreover, by preaching, in effect, that "the North has nothing to with us", the union bosses encourage Southern workers to look with hostility on those who "personify" the Northern issue in Southern politics.

The trajectory of this thinking leads to support for the repression of Republicans and others who insist on raising the North.

And every repressive measure deployed against Republicans will

be available for use against workers too when and if the economic struggle threatens the stability of Southern capitalism.

The ICTU bosses do Southern workers no favours when they steer clear of the North. Indeed, quite the contrary.

Socialists should campaign within their own unions, North and South, in defence of Mitchell. They should argue that it is the duty of the trade unions to grapple with the issues pertaining to the North.

Motions should be moved at IDATU branch meetings explicitly condemning the executive and demanding the removal of the "conditions" on Mitchell's employment.

If necessary, a special conference of IDATU should be requisitioned to instruct the executive to back off.

In the longer term what is needed is an explicitly socialist, rank-and-file movement within IDATU, as within the union movement as a whole.

One of the weaknesses of Mitchell's position is that his power base was among a minority of activists and of full-timers. Many of these seemed to assume that there was no need for socialist organisation since the general secretary himself was a left-winger and "sound" on the North.

However, having a left-winger as general secretary is not the same thing as having a left-wing union.

If IDATU had had an organised left-wing rank and file, the right-wingers on the executive wouldn't have dared make their move.

Socialist Worker repeats what we said more than a year ago when the ICTU leaders first reacted to Mitchell's interview: we call on union activists to support Mitchell.

The best way to do this is to campaign within the trade union movement for policies which oppose repression and which face up to the sectarian nature of the Northern State.

Paul Foot tour "The Revolutionary Road to Socialism"

Wed 29th Dublin
Belvedere Hotel 8.00pm

Thurs 30th Waterford
Wadding Hall 8.00pm

Fri 1st July Belfast
Conway Mill

Meeting on "Ireland—
Britain's problem"

Le Pen's Nazi threat

THE FRENCH Socialist party look set to win the National Assembly elections.

Throughout the campaign they claimed a moderate image as a "centre" party. But behind the hollow success of the socialists lies the fascist threat. Here JOSHUA CLARKE looks at how socialists are responding.

Although they dropped votes in the Assembly elections, the fascist party in France still commands considerable support.

But one vote for the fascist National Front is worth ten for the traditional right, in terms of the menace it poses to the working class.

Not only did Le Pen get 14% of the total electorate in the Presidential election but he's making inroads into the bedrock middle-class vote of the right. 31% of small shopkeepers and 24% of the self-employed, in general, voted Le Pen. More worryingly, for the Left, (and a sign of how demoralised Mitterand's last Government left the working class) 16% of factory workers and 19% of the unemployed favoured the fascists.

And, the National Front is fascist. Remember Le Pen's description of the holocaust as "a mere detail of history". Hitler's scapegoat was the Jews; Le Pen is also anti-semitic, but, primarily identifies unemployment, bad housing, crime etc. with blacks, whom the NF would repatriate.

Racism is endemic to French capitalist society—a disproportionate number of blacks are unemployed, their housing is restricted and they can't vote in municipal elections—but Le Pen's growth has seen an upsurge in racist attacks, as the NF organises bully-boys who would previously have been passive right-wing voters.

The response of the left to Le Pen's rise?

Some adopted his themes: A Minister in the last Mitterand government tried to link immigrant car-workers on strike with Islamic terrorists; the Communist Mayor of Vitry complained that other municipalities were using Vitry as a "dumping ground" for immigration. Some attacked his ideas from a



The Nazi thugs behind Le Pen's respectable image.

humanistic point of view, but didn't oppose the fascists directly: SOS Racisme became dominated by Socialist Party new realism, and sold badges and had concerts, but argued that combatting fascists physically was to be as bad as them.

Some ignored him when he was weak, still deny he's a fascist and debate with him on TV: ie Lutte Ouvriere, the largest French revolutionary group.

The 1970s saw the British left faced with its own National Front, also growing, also fascist.

Their response?

Some-most-made the mistakes the French Left are making. Some—first and foremost supporters of our sister party, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP)—put their energies into the establishment of an Anti-Nazi League, of Rock Against Racism and the organisation of numerous carnivals and demonstrations, all of which succeeded in finally smashing the Nazis.

TACTICS

Where the tactics of the ANL (which mobilised revolutionaries, black groups, labour lefts and Communists) differed from those of

the SOS Racisme was; first, their determination that fascists be denied their most potent weapon, the mass march (compare this with the ability of Le Pen to bring out 25,000 on May Day without any opposition!) secondly their hammering home the point that the National Front was a Nazi Front, pointing out to working class frontiers in particular, that the NF wouldn't just repatriate blacks but would, like Hitler destroy every form of workers self organisation.

It's not too late to build such a militant campaign against Le Pen, but it has to be started now, and the responsibility for that lies first and foremost with French revolutionaries.



Le Pen

Should socialists vote Democrat?

IN THE US Presidential election in November, the favourite is shaping up to be Mike Dukakis, the democrat from Massachusetts.

A middle-of-the-road liberal, Dukakis has described US Nicaraguan policy as "illegal and immoral". He has attacked the North's Diplock courts and his home state was the first to adopt the McBride principles which ban investment in firms in the North practising discrimination.

His criticism of Israeli terror have been muted, blaming instead "the intransigence of Arab leaders" for recent clashes in the occupied territories. He says he wants more arms control.

At election times here, a "vote left" call is generally made by revolutionary socialists for the reformist parties, ie. Sinn Fein, Labour and the Workers Party, or in Britain, the Labour Party.

Should this be applied to support for the Democrats in the US election? Do they represent



America's working class in the same way?

A closer look at the Democrats show that a vote for them is not the same as a vote for the reformist left parties here or in Britain.

The Democrats are an out and out right-wing party and have never since their foundation represented workers specific interests.

They emerged during the early 1800s as a mixture of skilled workers who had no interest in the union struggles of the time and the slave-owning plantocracy of the South. They fought the industrial capitalists of the North represented by the Republicans and led by Lincoln in the Civil War.

Their position as representatives of the working class has developed courtesy of union leaders who put the brakes on attempts to form a workers' party in the late 19th century.

ROOSEVELT

They encouraged links with the Democratic party instead. During the 1930s when workers began asserting themselves again, many called for a labour party. The union leaders once more channelled their members interests into the Democratic party and the New Deal. President Roosevelt himself admitted this was purely an attempt to rescue capitalism from crisis.

American unions have never had the same influence over the Democrats as, for example, British

unions have over Labour in terms of a bloc vote or control over policy decisions. They have constantly been ignored and even attacked by them as in the Taft-Hartley laws of 1948, which outlaw the closed shop.

The only group to ever have influence over Democratic policy is big business. Winning US elections requires the huge resources that only big business can provide so only a platform suitable to big business will win.

Up to the mid-70s the oil, gas and nuclear industries threw their weight behind the Democrats, before transferring it to the more favourable Republican policies of the time.

Richard Kline, a Democratic financier and executive director of Active Independent Oil and Gas Producers said during the 1986 congressional campaign.

"A great danger in America is if we go the way of the British with a labour party and a business party. And that's what's going to happen if the Democrats get no business money".

Since the 1930s the Democrats (like the Republicans) have been

influenced by the Business Council, an advisory organisation of top executives, in pushing pro-business policies at home and

"interventionist" foreign policy. The Democrats put one brand of capitalists against another (that of the Republicans) not workers against bosses.

They have never proposed a platform unacceptable to the US ruling class. Working class supporters will not change this situation and in any case most American workers do not bother to vote.

Some would argue that support for the "progressive" politics of Jesse Jackson could bring a change in the conditions for workers but he himself has said, "my positions are consistent with the Constitution, with Congress and ultimately the way the nation turns."

Support for Jackson will ultimately mean support for Michael Dukakis who has shown no interest in workers' interests.

To support the Democrats is to support the second party of US capitalism, a party whose only interest in the American working class is in using it as voting fodder.

The only way forward for the working class is to form an independent movement outside the two mainstream parties, committed to real socialist change.

CRISIS IN EASTERN EUROPE

The rulers of Eastern Europe face economic and political crisis. All the talk of "Glasnost" and "Perestroika" disguises the depth of this crisis.

Yet the problems of the Eastern European rulers are increasingly difficult to hide. The end of May saw the sacking of most of Hungary's leaders at the same time as groups of workers, students and intellectuals were setting up unofficial opposition groups.

In Poland, Solidarnosc made a welcome, if brief, return. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania all saw their versions of the events in Hungary and Poland.

Even as Reagan was making his visit to Moscow, the splits within the Russian ruling class were made public in interviews with British TV. From all over the USSR come reports of industrial unrest and of agitation by oppressed minorities.

Here, KEVIN WINGFIELD looks at the background to the crisis in Eastern Europe and at the realities behind "Glasnost".

UNTIL fairly recently it was widely believed that, whatever the shortcomings of the Eastern European system, economically it was a tremendous success.

Starting in Russia in the thirties and a decade or two later in the rest of the Eastern Bloc, rigid state direction of the economy resulted in the transformation of backward agricultural countries into modern industrial states.

Projects that private investors would not have had the confidence to back were accomplished by the state commandeering the resources. In this way the East seemed to be unaffected by the booms and slumps of the West.

So successful was this process that in the popular imagination, East and West, "socialism" came to be identified with "state planning".

But once this basic industrialisation had been accomplished, Eastern growth began to falter and no longer outstripped those of the West. Indeed they began to lag behind.

One problem was (and remains) the huge cost of the arms race. Russia, with an economy about half the size of the US, and with responsibility for the whole Warsaw Pact, devotes 12-15 per cent of its Gross National Product to military spending. In the US the figure is 5-6 per cent.

And the structure of the Eastern bloc economies makes things worse.

Production plans and targets are centrally decided at the highest possible level. This creates supply bottle-necks. In order to meet unpredictable future production targets, factory managers stockpile both workers and material despite the fact that they may have no current use for them.

The plan specifies a target output from a factory. The bonus—upon which the earnings of the management and the workforce depend—requires meeting this target. The result is that quality suffers with a large proportion of reject goods being counted as finished articles.

It has recently been reported that forty per cent of Russian televisions will break down in their first six months of use.

In this atmosphere of arbitrary power and lack of honest accounting, corruption is rife, morale at work is low and productivity suffers. The current performance of the economies of the Eastern Bloc is not competitive with even the lack-lustre, crisis-torn economies of the West.

Gorbachev-style "restructuring" is about trying to make the economy more efficient by introducing more rigorous profit-and-loss criteria, removing subsidies on basic consumer products and extracting greater productivity from workers.

In the process workers' living conditions suffer as bonuses are cut

and prices rise and several Eastern European states are now officially-planning unemployment as "unprofitable" factories are made "bankrupt". This has and will continue to provoke workers' resistance.

But as well as this, any plan to attack inefficiency, corruption and lack of accountability necessarily

hits at sections of the ruling bureaucracy itself.

There is determined obstruction from powerful entrenched interests. This, in part, explains the policy of "Glasnost" or openness. It is an attempt to mobilise public opinion in support of the "re-structuring" which Gorbachev knows is necessary but which powerful bureaucrats fear.

THERE IS a widespread myth that the populations of Eastern Europe are completely cowed by state intimidation. But the truth is that on many occasions workers have risen in explosive battles against their Stalinist rulers.

1953 Just three months after the death of Stalin, workers in building sites in East Berlin struck against cuts in wages and increases in work norms. Soon, waves of strikes and demonstrations spread across industrial centres in East

Germany. The movement was only put down after Russian troops were deployed and strike leaders were imprisoned and executed.

1956 Polish workers rose with strikes, demonstrations and workers councils, forcing a change of premier. In Hungary, a full-scale revolutionary uprising by the workers was finally crushed by 200,000 Russian troops with 3,000 tanks after seven days of bloody resistance.

1968 Czech workers physically resisted the crushing by the Russian Army of the "Prague Spring" reform

But without the mechanisms that bourgeois democracy provides in the West for peacefully dispersing discontent and dissent—opposition parties, trade unions, etc—the Eastern system is vulnerable to the combination of a split ruling class and an enraged working class. Developments in these circumstances could be explosive.

Solidarnosc lives!

EVENTS IN Poland in April and May have demonstrated that the Polish workers' movement is still alive.

Jaruzelski's military coup of December 1981, followed by martial law and the arrest of thousands of Solidarnosc activists, has not managed to extinguish the workers' resistance.

The strike wave began among transport workers in Bygoszcz following 45 per cent price rises imposed by the regime in an attempt to overcome the severe crisis in the Polish economy.

The workers demanded 50 per cent wage rises to compensate. Hoping to isolate the action, the regime conceded within a few days.

But almost immediately thousands occupied the massive steel mill in Nowa Huta. This time the demand was not only for wage increases for themselves, but for other workers as well and for the re-instatement of victimised Solidarnosc activists.

Shortly after, the movement spread to Gdansk as the Lenin shipyard was occupied, workers here adding the demand for the legalisation of Solidarnosc. Even after thousands of riot police, using concussion grenades and batons, smashed up the Nowa Huta occupation, strikes and occupations by workers and students were reported in Krakow, Wroclaw and Warsaw.

More recent reports indicate that the regime has stabilised the situation for the moment, but it would be a rash bureaucrat who imagined that this is the end of the matter.

From 1980-81 striking Polish workers have learned the importance of making political, class-wide demands. But they have also inherited the political confusions of that period.

Then the leaders of Solidarnosc argued that the movement should confine itself to demanding that the regime reform itself and not challenge the regime frontally. When the regime showed itself incapable of delivering serious reform, the movement lost its direction and self confidence and Jaruzelski pounced.

This time round Lech Walesa and most of the other leaders are arguing that what is needed is Gorbachev-style "market reform", with the accent on loosening the grip of the state on industry and organising on a profit-and-loss basis plus the granting of trade union rights.

But Gorbachev's economic reforms entail the dismantling of food subsidies, quickening the pace of exploitation at work, with a consequent loss of bonuses upon which workers' earnings depend, and even introducing official unemployment.

Moreover, by proposing a "partnership" with the government, the leaders of the Polish workers movement are themselves accepting the responsibility for the problems of the economy. So when Jaruzelski's

spokesman Jerzy Urban complained last month that strikes were undermining Polish economic reforms, they have no answer.

Since the 1980 events, a minority of activists has been dissatisfied with the reformism of Solidarnosc's leadership. Last November many of them formed a new political party, the Polish Socialist Party.

Although its political direction is still confused, this party is important for showing that hundreds of activists understand the need for independent, working class political organisation. It was the Polish Socialist Party that took the lead in calling for solidarity with the Nowa Huta strikers ahead of the various Solidarnosc organisations.



SUPPORTERS OF striking steel workers rally in Kracow (above) as plain clothes police attack May Day demonstrators



National re

THE RECENT demonstrations and riots in Armenia, together with last month's re-awakening of the Solidarity movement in Poland, are just the latest signs of profound crisis in the state capitalist societies of Eastern Europe.

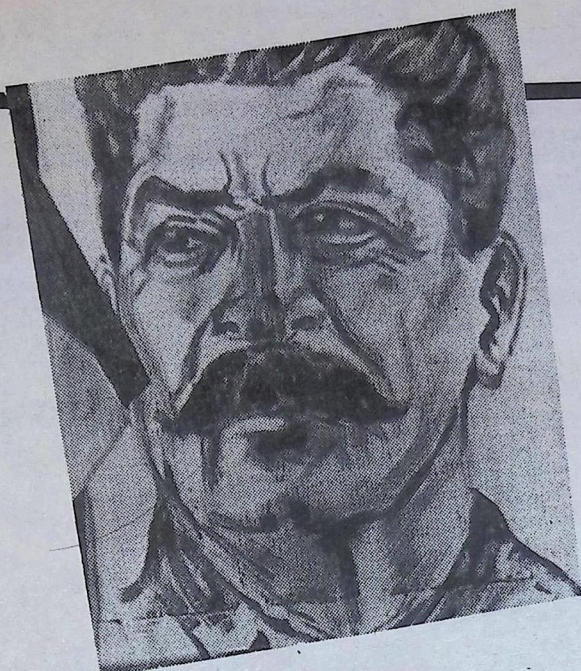
In Russia, Gorbachev's reform programme is an attempt to reduce corruption and inefficiency in the economy. Inevitably, it involves conflict with bureaucrats whose corruption and inefficiency, particularly during the Brezhnev years, is legendary.

Fifteen republics make up the USSR and there are dozens more nationalities. At the time of the revolution in 1917, the workers' government proclaimed self-determination for all the oppressed nations in what had been the Tzarist Russian empire.

This included the right to break away completely—an option Finland chose. Oppression of the nationalities by "Great Russian" chauvinism was outlawed. The celebration of national cultures and publications in local languages were officially promoted.

ROPE

movement. Metal workers refused to print an anti-reform party paper. 1970 Polish workers rose against price rises and wage cuts. Strikers were machine-gunned, but as workers armed, the regime was forced to replace the premier again. 1975 Fresh Polish workers' struggles created the workers' defence committees—KOR—which were to inspire Solidarnosc. 1980-81 The rise of the free trade union movement, Solidarnosc, led to wave after wave of strikes only put down by Jaruzelski's military coup of December 1981.



al revolts

However with the victory of Stalin and the destruction of the Revolution in the late twenties, all this changed. In order to consolidate the power of the new state capitalist bosses, workers' democracy was trampled under-foot in the name of building up heavy industry as rapidly as possible.

The nationalities were once more subordinated to Russia. The teaching of Russian in all schools was made compulsory, local rulers were appointed by Moscow and whole nationalities were expelled from their homes and transported to other parts of the empire.

Sixty years of national oppression has left a legacy of seething resentment against Russian imperialism.

In Armenia this combined

with conflicts within the ruling class over the pace and direction of economic restructuring — "perestroika"—to produce the biggest revolt since Stalin came to power.

Feeling was running high at the beginning of the year when thousands demonstrated in the Armenian capital, Yerevan, against pollution from two synthetic rubber factories.

In January, the official Moscow daily Pravda complained that the Armenian party bosses were blocking perestroika and accused them of corruption. Looking for a show of strength against Moscow, the Armenian bureaucrats decided to use Armenian national feeling in a stage-managed demonstration.

The region of Nagorno-Karabakh, although predominantly ethnically Armenian, is part of the republic of Azerbaijan. Demanding its incorporation into Armenia and giving the nod and wink to a demonstration was thought to be a

way of organising local feeling in support of the Armenian bureaucrats while posing no real threat to the integrity of the USSR.

The plan backfired. The two weeks of general strikes and a million or more demonstrating on the streets was much more than the milk and water affair the local party bosses had bargained for.

Leadership of the demonstrations was in the hands of non-party people.

Gorbachev had to fly in 29 plane loads of reinforcements, go on television for a 90 minutes plea for a return to work and an end to demonstrations and even negotiate directly with the unofficial leadership of the demonstrations.

Unfortunately, sixty years of Great Russian divide-and-rule tactics led to ugly scenes between Azeris and Armenians and deaths in inter-communal strife. Some Armenians have been persuaded to see the enemy among the Azeris and not in Moscow where their real oppressors are.

Moscow, even in the face of continuing strikes and demonstration demonstrations in the region last month, has been reluctant to grant substantial concessions to the Armenians. Such concessions could open the door, they fear, to fresh demands from the 100 oppressed nationalities within the USSR.

As in Kazakhstan some months ago, Moscow's attempts to clear away local party bosses blocking Gorbachev's reforms, only served to stir up the hornet's nest of mass nationalist opposition.



Armenian demonstrations—the glasnost Gorbachev fears

Major struggles ahead

A PERIOD of major struggles is dawning in the East. The crisis threatening the state capitalist countries is both economic and political.

The totalitarian political structures which Stalin's armies imposed after the second world war were crude machines designed to accumulate capital rapidly and create modern industrial states.

Top party bosses ruled through police repression and an army of privileged state functionaries organised in the Communist Parties. By totally smashing opposition and creating a monolithic ruling party where disputes were resolved by police measures, all of society was single-mindedly subordinated to the Five Year Plan.

From the point of view of the rulers all this worked tolerably well while there was no serious interruption of economic growth or mass discontent. But when things go wrong, they go wrong in a big way.

As the world economy descends into stagnation, and as the special circumstances which gave Eastern European economies a better than average performance

are exhausted, the political mechanisms are incapable of absorbing the stresses and discontents which are released.

Economic crisis has split the ruling class and demoralised the layer of functionaries upon whom it depends. Jaruzelski's military coup of December 1981 side-stepped the paralysed Polish party structures completely.

In Hungary, as we go to press, the first party conference for years has ended amid calls from within and without for an end to one party rule, and the dethroning of Janos Kadar—party boss for the last 32 years.

In Czechoslovakia the Charter 77 movement is exploiting splits within the ruling party to demand more civil rights.

OPPOSITION

Today in Russia, opposition to Gorbachev is openly organised within the Russian Communist Party as it, too, prepares for a special party congress—the first for over forty years. Russian imperialism faces humiliation in Afghanistan as its armies return home defeated. Estonian intellectuals and artists demand—again from within and without the party—to see the colour of

Gorbachev's Glasnost.

It is hardly possible, given the economic and political pressures on them, that the state capitalist rulers can create the sort of structures that could provide an adequate safety valve for discontent.

Nationalists demonstrate and workers strike. The invincibility of the unanimous Stalinist party is a thing of the past.

Socialists must rejoice at the opportunities this opens up. Not that Gorbachev is going to "humanise communism"—that would be wishful thinking. But at the signs of rebellion from masses of downtrodden and oppressed from Armenia to Nowa Huta.

If Polish workers look to religious symbols, if persecuted nationalities celebrate long-dead monarchs, it is because the language of Marxism has been prostituted and corrupted by their oppressors.

The struggles that are on the horizon will provide an opportunity for workers of Eastern Europe to build their class consciousness and discard stepping stones of nationalism and religious ideology. That process would be assisted if socialists in the West understood that, objectively, this is a fight between rulers and oppressed, bosses and workers, and offered unconditional support to the oppressed and the workers who are now fighting back.

Why Russia isn't socialist

WHEN SOCIALISTS argue for the need for a revolution we are often confronted with the reality of "socialist" Russia.

That same "socialist" Russia which smashed the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, invaded and occupied Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Afghanistan in 1979, and which today imprisons those fighting for free trade unions and suppresses religious and national minorities. Small wonder that this picture of socialism gives little inspiration to workers in the West.

However, a serious Marxist analysis of the countries of Eastern Europe reveals them neither to be socialist nor, as some on the left argue, a superior form of society that is on the road to socialism.

The position of today's Russian working class is the complete opposite of that which made the 1917 revolution. The essence of that revolution was the setting up of a workers' state—a union of soviets (workers' councils) to which delegates were elected from the workplace and were subject to instant recall.

Russia today is not a result of the revolution but a result of the defeat of the revolution by the Stalinist counter-revolution of the 1920s. The last remnants of workers' control over production, the Troika, was abolished in 1929. Today, Russian workers are powerless in that they exercise control neither over industry nor over the state. Trade unions are organs of the state whose function is to squeeze more production out of workers, and any attempt to set up free trade unions is suppressed.

However, while it is clear from this that Russia is not socialist it is, at first, less obvious that Russia is, in fact, capitalist. To understand why it is capitalist we must first examine what capitalism is.

Capitalism is not something fixed, but is a process which changes itself as it develops. Capitalism's dynamic—its underlying principle which remains unchanged as capitalism itself goes through its various changes—is that of accumulation.

A capitalist must accumulate—must convert the greatest amount of surplus value that s/he can bank into capital—to fulfil his/her role as a capitalist. This is accumulation purely for the sake of production, rather than for people's consumption needs.

Accumulation is due to two specific factors: first, workers are separated from the means of production and second, there is no competition between capitalists. The existence of competition compels the capitalist to accumulate or else be forced out of business.

WORKING CLASS

Take these two factors and apply them to Russia today. It is obvious that Russian workers have no control over the productive process. They only own their ability to work and are forced to sell their labour power to their employers in return for a wage. The Russian working class is a proletarian working class just like the Western working class.

It is less obvious that Russian rulers are subject to the same pressures of competition as Western capitalists. Considering Russia in isolation, different capitalist enterprises don't compete with one another in the traditional sense in Russia.

Within the economy itself there is a centralised administration of production. But Russia can't exist in isolation from the rest of the world.

Capitalism is an international system, and the main driving force shaping the Russian economy is that of international capitalist competition, mainly in terms of military build-up, but also in terms of direct trade.

In its competition with international capitalism the products of the labour of Western workers are compared with those of Eastern workers. Every increase in efficiency in the West necessitates a similar increase in the East and vice versa.

Accumulation in the West forces further accumulation in the East and it is these relations that determine the conditions in which Russian workers live.

Because of the existence of the fundamental features of capitalism in Russia—the separation of workers from the means of production and international capitalist competition—the Russian economy can only be described as capitalist. While there is no bourgeoisie in the sense of private owners of capital, the bureaucratic ruling class plays exactly the same role as Ruling classes in the West. This is why Marxists use the term "State capitalism" to describe the countries of Eastern Europe.

The failure of sections of the left to understand the real structure of these regimes which claim to be socialist means that they have often ended up defending a society which is just as exploitative and alienating as Western capitalism.

The countries of Eastern Europe cannot be made socialist by a few reforms here and there but, just as in the West, will require nothing less than a full-scale workers' revolution against the ruling class.

Genuine socialism has nothing in common with the Stalinist regime which took power in Russia in the late 1920s or with the bureaucratic regimes of Eastern Europe today.

Real socialism offers a world of prosperity and freedom instead of poverty, repression and exploitation. Given the material prosperity that exists in the world today, the achievement of genuine international socialism is a realistic historical possibility.

—GER TUOHY

ANALYSIS

Connolly and Easter 1916

SHOULD Connolly have joined the 1916 Rising?

A new biography of Connolly by Austin Morgan has raised this issue anew.

Here, Kieran Allen reviews Morgan's book and outlines the revolutionary socialist approach to Connolly's involvement in 1916.

The first biography of Connolly published in recent times was written by Desmond Greaves, a supporter of the Communist Party. Greaves presented Connolly as an Irish Lenin. His every concession to nationalist politics was praised. The manner in which he joined the 1916 rebellion was portrayed as the highest point of political wisdom and as a vindication of the Communist Party's "stages theory"

This is the theory which says that socialists must ally themselves to progressive nationalists to win Irish independence before they can raise socialist perspectives.

Morgan's aim is to challenge this view. He was prompted to write the book, he says, by "the way Irish nationalism was enjoying a rejuvenation around the British Labour Party recently". His implicit aim then is an attack on the "fundamentalists" who wish to raise "simplistic" slogans for Troops Out and for an end to the border.

Morgan's argument has the merit of simplicity itself: Connolly arrived in Ireland with "a British conception of a socialist strategy". In other words he saw the election of a Labour majority at Westminster as the key strategic goal. He was at this period an "international socialist" who was vague about the question of "which international state system" he favoured for Irish socialists.

But, says Morgan, in 1914 (on the 30th August to be precise) Connolly ceased to be a socialist. Under the pressure of war and working class defeat, he became a nationalist. Not only that but a "germanophile" who "collaborated with a wartime imperialist state".

If he had survived the Rising, Morgan argues, he would not have been a socialist of any sort but would probably have become a leader of Sinn Fein.

Morgan's attempt to find a neat break in Connolly's career simply does not work. In the 1890s Connolly did hold to the strategy outlined by the Second International. This emphasised the electoral struggle and rejected conspiratorial politics. In line with this, Connolly castigated the republicans for being a mere physical force party and not using the ballot box.

But Morgan ignores the fact that Connolly stood on the extreme left of this tradition from an early

stage. As early as after 1900, he was to align himself with the American Socialist Labour Party—the only party in the world then to break with reformism. Running for a corporation seat in Edinburgh in 1894 he had declared that "the election of a Socialist to any public body is only valuable in so far as it is the return of a disturber of the public peace".

When he arrived in Ireland, his criticisms of republicans were not simply mounted from a conventional British socialist position—they were from the extreme left. His criticism of physical force republicans was not a pacifist or moral one like Keir Hardie's. It was rather that "their conception of what constitutes freedom was in no sense changed or revolutionised (by their commitment to physical force); they still believed in the political form of freedom which had been their ideal in their constitutional (nationalist) days".

In his paper, the Workers Republic, Connolly attacked them continually for relying on a strategy that involved a "Union of all Classes".

It was precisely because Connolly stood on the extreme left of the Second International, that he was able to break with the dominant Second International position on the national question.

This position saw no revolutionary potential in the struggle against national oppression. It argued instead for a limited form of autonomy and gradual capitalist development until a sufficiently large working class emerged to vote in a "socialist" government.

VICTIMS

Connolly rejected this position totally. Instead of seeing the workers of a colony like Ireland as mere victims of oppression who had to be eased into the modern world, he saw them as the main agent of change. Not only that, but he saw that only way to achieve independence for Ireland was through a fight for a socialist republic. On the membership cards of his first party, the Irish Socialist Republican Party, founded in 1896, was written: "the national and economic freedom of the Irish people must be sought in the same direction—the establishment of an Irish socialist republic".

Thus, far from having a "conventional British conception of a socialist strategy", Connolly differed from the main representatives of British socialism in a number of respects. He stood for complete separation of Ireland from Britain as distinct from some form of autonomy within the British Empire. He attacked the British socialist movement for working, for opportunist reasons with the Irish Home Rule party.

He advocated a break in the all-class nationalist alliance when British ILPers such as Sexton were arguing that Irish workers should back Home Rule candidates. And he committed, what was seen as the gravest heresy of all—in a backward impoverished country, he looked to the working class and its struggle for socialism as the means for achieving national independence.

Morgan chooses to ignore most of this and to make little of the rest. Connolly is criticised for "internalising the metropolitan ethos whereby the proletariat had overshadowed the peasantry". He denounces the claim that from his arrival in Ireland Connolly stood for a working class leadership on the



national question as "preposterous" and "mythical". This assertion is necessary to prove a sharp break between Connolly's early "international socialism" and his later revolutionary nationalism.

The result is that Morgan fails completely to get to grips with the problems in Connolly's position—problems which throw some light on his later involvement in the 1916 rising. These were twofold.

First, the arguments that Connolly used to justify a specifically socialist position on the national question left him soft on nationalism itself. In his first pamphlet, *Erin's Hope* Connolly claimed the conquest of Ireland by England was not simply a political affair.

At its roots was a conflict over two different types of land system. There had, he argued existed in Ireland before the conquest a form of primitive communism. The English imposed feudalism and capitalism. Undoing the conquest, therefore, demanded a return to the Gaelic notions of "socialistic ownership".

He argued, therefore, that Irish nationalism of its nature tended towards socialism. Connolly further argued that an Irish capitalist republic had become an impossibility due to the "glutting of the world market" by the goods of the stronger imperial powers.

These positions led Connolly both to imagine a socialist dynamic in the values of Gaelic cultural nationalism and to underestimate the possibility of the emergence of a more militant bourgeois nationalism.

The second major problem with Connolly was his relationship to the republicans. Connolly subjected them to harsh criticism on their strategy and tactics—but he never encouraged them to break with republicanism.

In fact, he aimed to pull the republican tradition over into socialism. One striking example of this was his failure to confront the leader of republicanism in the early years of the century, Arthur Griffith.

Griffith was a militant nationalist—but also a rabid anti-socialist who argued for the development of a protectionist form of Irish capitalism. Yet in all the articles of the *Workers' Republic* there is not a single direct criticism of Griffith's ideas. In fact Connolly constantly sought to win Griffith's backing for ISRP candidates.

When Griffith offered support in

1902, Connolly wrote: "we have always maintained that every honest friend of freedom would sooner or later find themselves in accord with us. The support now spoken proves this: ere long our banner will be the natural rallying centre for all the forces in favour of clean and virile politics in Ireland."

In a nutshell, then, Connolly failed to understand that one could stand with the republicans against the British empire, yet still subject their politics to merciless criticism. He failed to do what Lenin had done with the physical-force Narodnik movement in Russia: he stood with them against the Tsar—but polemicised, attacked and ultimately destroyed their tradition of politics.

These earlier positions of Connolly were to have a direct bearing on the manner in which he joined the 1916 Rising. There were not two Connollys—a nationalist and a previous "international socialist" one! There was rather a revolutionary situated inside the politics of the Second International, working in isolation, trying to establish a strategy for socialists in the colonies.

CONCESSIONS

Ultimately his politics fell victim to the collapse of the second international and his own concessions to nationalism.

Consider Connolly's position on the outbreak of war. He had lived through the most terrifying period of reaction in Ireland. In 1912 in Belfast he saw the Orange Order-Home Rule movement, the mass expulsion of Catholics from the shipyards and Protestant workers giving support to the most bigoted representatives of imperialism, Carson and Bonar Law.

In 1914, he had witnessed the defeat of the great lock-out in Dublin through the scabbing of the TUC. In June of that year he saw the prospect of partition becoming a reality.

At the end of the same year, he was to witness the worst of all: the cowardice of socialists before the war. Not only the unbelievable sell-outs of the German and French socialists, but the petty cowardice of members of his own party. At that time a member of the Independent Labour Party (Ireland), Connolly saw his proposal to continue anti-war meetings in Belfast defeated by the tiny handful of members.

Moreover, the Second International had led him to expect a general stoppage against the war.

Connolly initially argued for the general stoppage but seeing that this was unattainable began to move closer to the nationalists. His class politics were weakened by the fact that the workers who fought in 1913 were now joining the British army in droves.

In this situation it was Connolly who first campaigned for a 1916-style insurrection through pressuring the republican leadership. His aim was to "strike a blow" both for Irish freedom and against the war effort.

The manner and method by which Connolly approached 1916 must be criticised. He was attempting to find a substitute for a working class that had become caught up in war hysteria. He submerged himself completely within the IRB. He failed to raise the question of the insurrection in the ITGWU of which he was general secretary. In the run-up to the Rising itself he failed to issue any distinctive socialist propaganda and simply put his name to the proclamation.

This happened as a result of the situation he found himself in—and as a result too, of the earlier concessions his politics had made to republicanism.

But for all these criticisms—and they do expose great weakness in Connolly's politics—the simple fact remains: the 1916 Rising was a significant blow against an imperial power. It was far more significant than all the gestures made by the more pacifist socialists of the day such as Kautsky who talked of joint-French-German demonstrations, peace conferences, plans for a "just settlement", and so forth.

Connolly in his mistakes was superior in grasping that to fight against war you have to fight against your own rulers.

Denouncing Connolly as a Germanophile who "collaborated with a war time state" makes as much sense as denouncing Lenin for taking a train ride to Petrograd courtesy of the German General staff. Those who attack Connolly's "blood sacrifice", or his "pro-German" stance conceal their own pacifism and their inability to break with their own ruling class.

Revolutionary socialists do have accounts to settle with the Connolly tradition. But Mr. Morgan, writing from an academic, anti-revolutionary position, has nothing to contribute to this process.

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EAMONN McCANN

All the Green Tories

IN AN address to members of Sinn Fein in Derry last month Mitchel McLaughlin, leader of the party on Derry City Council, made it clear that Sinn Fein wants an alliance with Green Tories.

He said that the time had come for all shades of nationalism "to agree one simple proposition, namely the Irish people's right to national self-determination".

And in case anybody thought there was any shade of Irish nationalism too right wing for Sinn Fein, Mitchel spelled it out: "the SDLP, Fianna Fail and other parties in the 26 Counties" would be welcomed into a campaign for "a negotiated British withdrawal".

Clearly, the "other parties in the 26 Counties" must include Fine Gael and the Progressive Democrats.

Mitchel McLaughlin explained his central argument thus: "Irish self-determination is a principle to which every Irish nationalist can subscribe. The SDLP, Fianna Fail and other parties in the 26 Counties are on record supporting the concept of independence in one way or another. This support must now become a practical campaign with a minimum objective of a negotiated British withdrawal. After that it will be up to all Irish men and women to decide in an amicable fashion the structures within which the Irish people can live and prosper".

First we get the Brits out. After that—and only after that can the question of which class is to rule be raised. De Valera said it all rather more succinctly away back in 1918: "Labour must wait".

Republican supporters commonly claim that statements such as Mitchel McLaughlin's are not to be taken at face value, that Sinn Fein doesn't mean that it wants an alliance with Grenn Toryism, that it's all a political ploy to wrong-foot or expose the SDLP, Fianna Fail etc.

The notion underlying this explanation is that Hume, Haughey, Dukes, O'Malley etc. will be shown up as sell-outs when or if they reject an invitation to join with



Dukes, O'Malley, Hume and Haughey

Sinn Fein in a campaign for British withdrawal.

In fact, the leaders of constitutional nationalism are past masters at aiming "republican" rhetoric at the Brits while taking care not to do anything hostile to essential British interests. In this context Haughey has been playing a blinder over the past six months. The idea that he—or Hume, Dukes, O'Malley etc.—is about to be manoeuvred by a sly Sinn Fein strategist is a charming thought, but hopelessly unrealistic.

And, anyway, while there is, of course, an element of manoeuvring involved, that is not the explanation of Sinn Fein strategy.

The truth is that Sinn Fein *does* believe in an all-class nationalist alliance. The Republican Movement is not socialist. It is nationalist. At the heart of its core ideology is the assumption that the most fundamental dividing line in society is between nations, not between classes.

Thus it believes that the working class Sinn Fein voter in the Bogside or Ballymun has something—"Irishness"—in common with the Fianna Fail (or Fine Gael or Progressive Democrat) millionaire from Foxrock, and that this shared Irishness can form the basis for "a practical campaign with a minimum objective of negotiated British withdrawal".

Socialists look at it very differently. We say that the Foxrock millionaire has far more in common with the British ruling class than with any Irish worker; that insofar as representatives of Irish capitalism have ever joined with workers against the Brits it has been precisely to ensure that the workers don't develop independent, class-based politics which would be a challenge to capitalism.

The SWM, therefore, is totally opposed to Sinn Fein's strategy of seeking an all-class alliance. We say that the priority is to build a party which is opposed to the British presence and also in favour of the overthrow by the working class of the native Irish capitalism with whose political representatives Sinn Fein is so anxious to ally.

What we stand for

The Socialist Workers Movement is a marxist organisation fighting for a workers' republic in Ireland and for socialism internationally.

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

We begin from the proposition that what determines the nature of any society is the system by which its wealth is produced. In the system we live under, capitalism, production is geared to profit, not to human need. Among its inevitable features are poverty, war, racism and sexism. Capitalism cannot be destroyed and these evils thus eradicated by piecemeal reform. It can only be destroyed by revolutionary action by the class which creates all the wealth, the working class.

The machinery of the capitalist state—parliament, courts, army, police etc—is designed to protect the interests of the ruling capitalist class, not to regulate society in a neutral fashion. At most, parliament can be used, sometimes, to make propaganda against capitalism. It cannot be used to smash capitalism. Only a workers' revolution can do that and establish a truly democratic society in which workers hold power directly through delegates elected from workplaces and areas and are re-callable and replaceable at any time by those who elect them.

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

This kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers do not have control in Russia, China, Cuba etc. Instead, power is held by a state-capitalist class. A workers' revolution is needed in these countries too.

We are against NATO and the Warsaw Pact and all weapons of mass destruction. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

FOR AN END TO PARTITION

The Northern State was created by British imperialism in its own interests. Sectarianism and bigotry were built into it and will continue to exist for as long as the state exists.

The marginal privileges given to Protestant workers are just that: marginal. It is in the immediate interest of Protestant as well as Catholic workers to fight against their exploitation. It is in the interest of all Northern workers to unite against the state and aim at socialism in Ireland.

We support all forces struggling against imperialism and the Northern state, regardless of differences we may have with them.

The interests of the Southern ruling class are no longer in fundamental conflict with those of imperialism. Southern capitalism is a junior player in the world capitalist system. The Southern state too, props up partition, despite occasional nationalist rhetoric. The "national question" can be solved only by mass working class struggle against both states. Republicanism, by limiting the immediate struggle to the achievement of "national unity", and by appealing for all-class alliances in pursuit of this goal, can never lead the working class towards the defeat of imperialism.

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We fight for free contraception, abortion on demand and the right to divorce. We oppose all discrimination against gays and lesbians. We stand for secular control of hospitals and schools. We fight for the complete separation of church and state.

FOR A FIGHT IN THE UNIONS

Trade unions exist to protect workers' interests under capitalism. The role of trade union leaders is to negotiate with bosses over workers' position within capitalism. To destroy capitalism, we need a rank and file movement in the unions separate from the leaderships and fighting for workers' interests regardless of the needs of capitalism.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To destroy capitalism and achieve socialism the most class conscious sections of the working class must be organised in a revolutionary party. The SWM aims to build such a party through spreading its ideas and through its activity in the working class movement. We stand in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We urge all who sympathise with our politics to join us.

What's On

The Socialist Workers Movement meets regularly in branches around the country.

Each meeting begins with a political discussion. Meetings are open to those who support the politics of the paper *Socialist Worker*, and want to find out more about the SWM.

BELFAST branch of the SWM meets in the Conway Mill at 7.30 on Monday nights.
June 13: Women and Socialism
June 29: Is there a Fascist Threat in France?
PUBLIC MEETING
Friday July 1st: PAUL FOOT and EAMONN McCANN
Ireland—Britain's Problem
Venue to be announced.

CORK branch meets in the Clock Inn Tavern on Thursday nights at 8 pm.

June 9: Poland Gorbachev's weak point.
June 16: The rise of the far right in France.
June 23: Human Nature—is it competitive?
June 30: The Middle East

GALWAY branch meets in Billy Walshe's Bar, Dominick St. on Tuesday nights.

June 16: Racism
June 21: PUBLIC MEETING
Women and Socialism
June 28: US Elections

DUBLIN branch meets every Wednesday in the Batchelor Inn at 8pm.
June 15: Marx and Economic

Crisis.
June 22: Vietnam
June 29: PUBLIC MEETING
July 6: Human Nature.

WATERFORD SWM DAY SCHOOL SATURDAY JULY 25th

Sessions on:
REPUBLICANISM; REFORMISM and
POLAND.

For details contact local Socialist Worker sellers.

Join us!

- I would like to join the SWM
- I would like more details of SWM

NAME

ADDRESS

send to SWM, PO Box 1648,
Dublin 8

REVIEWS

The real '68 story

A SMALL industry has developed around the 20th anniversary of the events in 1968. Books, documentaries and television discussions have been produced. I can't claim to have seen or read them all but the view that is generally presented is of a period of great cultural energy—a period when youth and youth culture came to the fore.

"The greatest radicalisation of young people took a primarily cultural rather than political form", writes Marxism Today, a magazine produced by the British Communist Party. It is as if the 10 million taking part in the General Strike in France, had never existed.

Chris Harman's new book, "The Fire Last Time 1968 and After" is a welcome antidote to this view, putting the working class and working class action at the centre of the events.

Instead of just looking at the events of '68, it examines them as a part of a general explosion of working class militancy that shook the Western capitalist countries from 68-76.

For revolutionary socialists the fifties and sixties were a depressing time. Twenty years of almost continuous economic growth led many to believe that the crisis-ridden twenties and thirties were gone forever. The means were now available one

commentator wrote, for the "organisation of production, control of inflation, and maintenance of full employment". Capitalism had managed to resolve its contradictions and consensus politics were the order of the day.

The alternative to this consensus was the model of Stalinism and Russia and Eastern Europe. Even those who opposed these two

alternatives wrote off the possibility of a revolutionary working class believing that the working class had been bought off by the "fruits" of capitalism—televisions, holidays etc..

Beneath the skin of consensus politics, the reality was quite different.

Capitalism was far from resolving its contradictions. The very mechanisms that had contributed to the stability of the previous twenty years, built up the forces that were to challenge that stability.

The US, the most powerful country in the world was being challenged by one of the poorest—Vietnam. Increasing numbers moved from the countryside to provide the labour force for expanding capitalism.

Education, especially at third level, previously only available to a small elite, grew massively. The student numbers in France for instance grew from 200,000 in 1960 to 550,000 in 1968. Even the Stalinist monolith was being challenged in Czechoslovakia.

In each country other specific factors were to lead to the upsurge in militancy; in France an authoritarian state forced to make concessions to the students



Renault workers occupy their factory

which gave confidence to the working class to fight for their own demands; in the Northern cities of the US a

Northern Ireland an irreformable sectarian state.

But in each country the upsurge was defeated. The reason for the defeats are the central point of the book.

Many of the struggles described started more or less spontaneously. But within a short period the established reformist parties stepped in to gain control of the movements. The revolutionary left was too

small and with little roots within the working class to be able to provide a revolutionary alternative.

Within a short review it is not possible to do justice to all the arguments in this book.

But everyone with a passing interest in socialism and the means of achieving it should read this book.

—WILLIE CUMMING

OUT NOW



The real story of 1968

Chris Harman's

The Fire Last Time: 1968 And After

£6.95 from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

FASCIST

new black working class faced with the same racism it had faced in the South; fascist dictatorships in Spain Portugal and Greece; in

The Unbearable Lightness of Being

The setting is Prague in 1968 under Dubcek. The joyful liberalism of the "Prague Spring" followed by the terror of the Russian invasion serve as a backdrop to this very enjoyable film's exploration of personal relationships.

Daniel Day-Lewis plays Tomas, a brain surgeon who has rejected stable relationships in favour of a great many casual ones in which neither partner impedes on the freedom of the other.

Sabina, his lover, is in perfect sympathy with his desires. A spanner in the form of the touchingly naive Tereza, who is genuinely attracted to Tomas and he to her.

Gradually life becomes darker and heavier. Tomas' continued philandering is increasingly tinged with guilt in the face of Tereza's simple

dependency.

The Russians invade. Tereza and Tomas go first to Switzerland. They return to Prague to find that the brief experience of intellectual freedom felt under Dubcek has been thoroughly crushed by the Russian takeover.

The skilfully recreated Russian invasion is one of the highlights of the film. Actual documentary footage of the event is carefully spliced with shots of the film's characters. It captures perfectly the fear and confusion of the invasion.

My only criticism of the film is that despite the fine performances of the actors, the main characters—especially Tomas, remain somewhat two dimensional. But the humour passion and intelligence of the film make "Lightness" well-worth seeing.

—EVE MORRISON



Wall Street racketeers

'I don't create ...I own'

"WALL STREET" tells the story of Bud Fox, an ambitious young stockbroker who, through "kicking ass and making phone calls" manages to "back the elephant".

This sounds a trifle perry until it's revealed that the elephant in question is not an elephant at all but a man, Gordon Gekko.

Gordon Gekko is a ruthless corporate giant. To him money is "better than sex" and "greed is good. Greed is right . . . Greed will save America".

Bud, by various methods (ie. double crossing his dad and tailing a rival corporate boss on a motor bike in a three piece suit) acquires information which enables them to manipulate share prices and make millions of dollars.

Wall Street starts promisingly and Michael Douglas gives a fine performance as the ruthless

Gekko. Charlie Sheen seems too preoccupied with his own self image to gain anything substantial from the part of Fox.

The film itself falls apart about half way through and eventually lapses into sentimental slop. By the time it reaches the prodigal son scene, which is set "ingeniously" in a hospital, you wonder if you've fallen asleep and woken up at "Little House on the Prairie" The Movie". Gekko says in the film, "I don't create, I own". Those who do create the wealth that he owns are unimportant. Lives and livelihoods are unimportant in the world of high finance.

Wall Street gives us a good reason to cheer even louder next time there's a crash and they all jump out of their windows on to Wall Street.

Even better, the top guys have further to fall.

—BARBARA BERGIN

Ex-IDA man short circuits union rights

SPECIAL INTERVIEW

WORKERS AT Irish Printed Circuits in Walkinstown, Dublin have been on strike since 16th March.

They are demanding the re-instatement of a colleague who was sacked when he fainted at work. They also want recognition of their union the MSF.

Socialist Workers spoke to a striker about the issues involved.

SW. How many people are on strike?

Striker. There are 15 out—originally there were 22 strikers. At the moment there are about 50 people working inside.

When the strike started the management sent around a petition asking people not to join a union. Most of the scabs are only there for a few

months so they signed in order to keep their jobs.

At the end of the form they had a guarantee that this did not affect their right to join a union. That's obviously a joke!

SW. Scabbing is obviously a major obstacle but apart from that how is the strike progressing?

Well we have the all-out picket and we won the Labour Court Case for both re-instatement of the sacked workers and recognition of MSF.

But Michael Clear, the boss, turned around and refused to accept the Labour Court's decision. He thinks he can do as he likes. He says, he gave us a committee so that we didn't need a union. He's right—he gave it to us, it's his committee and his rules. We had no say at all—it was useless.

SW. What is production like at the factory? Has it been cut?

They say production is up to normal But we found

schedule sheets in the skip which showed that they are behind on production.

They've had to recruit loads of workers since the strike and they're working 16-hour shifts. The scabs also have a bonus—£50 a week to break the strike.

SW. How have the scabs been reacting to the strikers?

The scabs are intimidating the strikers—you usually think it's the other way round.

WITNESSES

The cops are as bad. One scab, Reggie McNally, attacked a striker but the cops said they had no witnesses so they couldn't prove anything.

We are consistently harassed by the gardai. they accuse us of damaging cars and intimidating scabs.

The cops actually told us that the company carries weight, that they'll listen to

Michael Clear but not to us. Employers can break the law as much as they like but we get all the hassle. It seems we pay our taxes just to get harassed by the gardai.

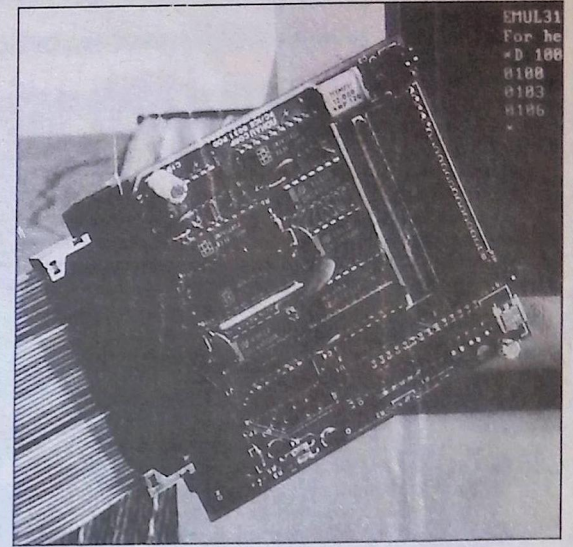
SW. What are conditions like in the factory?

There are dangerous chemicals and equipment inside. There have been accidents as well—there was even an explosion but no-one was hurt.

There are no fire extinguishers, no fire bell and not even a proper fire exit. We never have had a fire drill. A fire at IPC would definitely mean deaths.

Michael Clear told us that he'd buy us a fire extinguisher if we made £50,000 a week for him. That's the price of life as far as he's concerned.

Michael Clear is only concerned with making money. He was an IDA boss and someone came to him with an



High Tech—Low conditions

idea for making printed circuits. He thought it was a good idea so he turned down the grant and started up IPC himself.

He mustn't get away with this any longer—that's why we are looking for solidarity from other workers, in order to beat him.

CPSSU:

Minority attack Plan

CIVIL Servants are often seen as well-paid and lazy. Delegates at the recent Civil and Public Services Staff Union Conference told a different story.

The CPSSU represents the lowest grades, the majority of Civil servants. Low pay is a major problem for these grades.

One branch did a survey of its members which showed that 73% earn less

than £150 per week.

About 37% of members could not afford a holiday in 1987.

The average clerical wage in private industry is over £200 per week. Working conditions are no consolation!

Several motions at the Conference centred on the question of understaffing. The Government's embargo on recruitment made things bad enough. The plan for massive redundancies in the Public Service can only make things worse.

FRUSTRATION

The crisis means more people need Social Welfare assistance but there are less workers to provide the service. Frustration on both sides of the hatch has resulted in some dole office workers being physically attacked.

Far from being lazy, Civil Servants now have a heavier workload than ever.

The Programme for National Recovery can only compound the problem. It limits pay increases to 3% per year and endorses Fianna Fail's cuts.

Some delegates attacked the Plan but the mood of the Conference was one of accepting the Plan as "the best deal possible". The new General Secretary, John O'Dowd backed up this argument.

Civil Servants who oppose the Plan and who want to fight need to organise within the union to push for this.

The strong words spoken at the Conference must be turned into action.
—DAVE McDONAGH
CPSSU Telecom.

INTO:

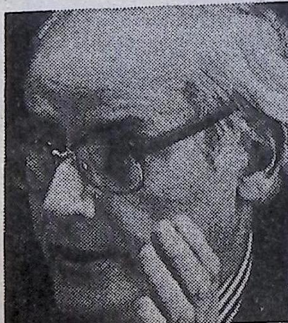
Anger at cuts

The INTO voted by two to one to accept the package on job cuts at a special conference in May. The margin however among rank and file members of the union was probably closer. In the largest Dublin branch, the package was carried by only 17 votes.

Over 800 jobs will go over the next year. Class sizes will be pushed up to 39 in most schools. This position will last for two years. After that there is a promise from Fianna Fail to restore the cuts. They clearly hope to have driven enough people out of the country, so that the cost of primary education will have decreased anyway.

INTO leaders Gerry Quigley and Joe O Toole patted themselves on the back for winning the "best possible deal" from the government. Throughout the conference the "left-wing" Senator O Toole made considerable play on the "new realist" arguments. Strike action, he claimed no longer worked. The miners in Britain had been defeated. So too had the fire-fighters in Ireland.

The important thing he claimed was that the unions should not be driven out of the corridors of power like they had in Britain. It was necessary to compromise. Several delegates expressed



Gerry Quigley

their anger at this gutlessness. They pointed out that the union has passed resolutions for years calling for a reduction in class sizes. They had never taken action over it—but instead got themselves stuck "in the corridors of power".

The result now was an increase in class size. A charge by one delegate that the union was involved in collaboration with FF got a good reception.

This charge of collaboration was denied by an executive member who, coincidentally, happened to be a FF councillor from Lifford. 15 copies of Socialist Worker were sold at the conference.

RTE's 'silent strike'

12 Receptionist/telephonists in RTE have been on strike for two months.

The strike started on April 11, when the workers were told that RTE was replacing two permanent telephonists (who had been paid a lump sum voluntary redundancy) with a pool of telephonists who would be working in another sector.

These were to be hired casually, in four, on an hourly-paid basis. This new system would begin immediately without negotiation.

Before Eurovision, management were scared stiff. They offered permanent jobs or two-year contracts to the 5 strikers who hold temporary status.

One has been "temporary" on a full working week, for six years. But with Eurovision over, management put the boot in. They want the casual paid telephonists to remain, and the latest management circular talks of possible job losses for the more vulnerable strikers in January 1989.

The strikers are determined to win. But they will need the support of other workers. FWUI members in RTE have been making solidarity collections but as one striker told SOCIALIST WORKER: "people have been telling us that it's like a silent strike".

Management scabs have been working the switchboards. The occupation was made ineffective by the switching of telephone lines. Strikers have been prevented from leafleting other workers by



security. There are 500 FWUI workers in RTE. A complete strike by that number could fight to win.

And the issue at stake is important. If RTE push through casualisation for the telephonists, it will be the signal for attacks elsewhere.

FLYNN'S SELL OUT

PHIL Flynn, the general secretary of the LGPSU, has sunk to a new low. He has accepted an invitation to join a committee to look into "efficiency" in the public sector. He will be joined there by representatives of the employers. The aim of the new outfit is to raise productivity and

chop more jobs. Flynn has also reacted to his own members taking action. Workers in the Eastern Health Board got tired of putting up with bad ventilation. They walked out in protest. Flynn issued a public statement denouncing their action.

RECORD

With a record like this, it is no wonder that he is being allowed back on RTE. He has become the prime mover and defender of the National Plan.

Yet in all these twists and turn turns there has not been a word out of Sinn Fein as regards his status with that organisation. When Gerry Adams was asked what his attitude to Flynn was at a public meeting there was merely an excuse offered that he was following union and not Sinn Fein policy.

Yet any organisation claiming to be a revolutionary socialist one would have expelled Flynn long ago or disowned him for his anti-working class actions. Tragically, there is no sign that Sinn Fein will do this.

Kane's shame

A GROUP of anti-extradition activists were kicked off a Connolly Commemoration in Dublin recently.

The Commemoration, on May 15th, was organised by the ITGWU Dublin District Council. The anti-extradition group joined the march at Church Street but when they reached Arbour Hill gardai refused them admission to the grounds. They said they were acting on the instructions of the march organisers.

When pressed, gardai said

the instruction came from John Kane, Secretary of the Dublin District Council. Kane told the anti-extradition group, "we don't want your sort on the march".

Kane should be condemned by all trade unionists and socialists. His action is just another attempt to keep the issue of the North out of Trade Unionism. In fact by calling the cops to do his dirty work, Kane was behaving more like an employer than a trade unionist.

Socialist Worker

What a liar!

She
rants
about
'human
rights'

THE REAGAN-Thatcher duo are talking of "human rights" again.

After the recent summit in Moscow, Western concern for human rights got top billing in the news media. Reagan called for the release of dissidents from Russian jails.

Thatcher joined in the chorus by claiming that Russia still had a long way to go to catch up with Western standards on Human Rights.

What absolute hypocrisy! In her

own backyard in Northern Ireland, Thatcher has given the Russians a powerful example on how to trample on human rights.

- It was Britain who was convicted for "inhumane treatment" of prisoners at the European Court. In other words torture.

- Northern Ireland has the highest proportion of political prisoners per head of population in the world.

- Its judicial system is based on juryless courts with openly acknowledged judges who have been members of the sectarian Orange Order.

- Police powers in Northern Ireland

rival those of the KGB. Seven day detentions are possible under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Freedom of travel and "emigration" to Britain itself can be denied.

- Political dissidents do not just risk treatment in psychiatric hospitals—they are liable to be shot. The Stalker-Sampson report revealed that the RUC planted three ancient rifles in a hay-shed in order to set up republicans for murder. It showed the existence of an elite RUC squad E4A that executed Seamus Grew and Roddy Carrol in cold blood.

Sixteen years after the intro-

duction of Direct Rule, job discrimination is still openly admitted. Catholics are more than twice as likely as Protestants to be unemployed

Britain's record on "human rights" in Northern Ireland is abysmal. Yet now the woman who personally ordered the execution of three IRA members in Gibraltar, dares to lecture others on human rights. She must be told loud and clear: Release her own dissidents, Disarm her own terror squads. Withdraw her troops just as Gorbachev has been forced to withdraw his from Afghanistan.

Old Stormont in new clothes

MANY PEOPLE who have been so used to hearing "No, No, No," from the leaders of Ulster Unionism have been amazed at Molyneaux's recent attempts at "reconciliation".

He was, for a time actually proposing to meet with Haughey to discuss new proposals for Northern Ireland.

Some journalists even talked about a basis for real peace on the island. For SDLP supporters, Molyneaux's overtures are seen as proof that the Anglo-Irish agreement is working—it has brought brought the Unionists to the bargaining table.

But few have bothered to ask what bargain Molyneaux is offering. Neither have they asked what he means by a new agreement which would deal with "the totality of relationships".

The enthusiasm which Haughey has pushed his meeting with Molyneaux should not fool anyone. Haughey has never been slow to avail himself of a chance to engage in "stroke politics". So he has jumped on the bandwagon to give

the impression of a new breakthrough happening in Northern Ireland. But while Haughey plays the role of a great national statesman, one group who will certainly gain nothing from these games are Northern nationalists.

Molyneaux is proposing an alternative to Dublin involvement in Northern Ireland affairs as it is conceived under the Anglo-Irish agreement. He is suggesting that Dublin have a say not just in Northern Ireland but in England, Scotland and Wales as well. This would mean that it could act in a similar way to that where France might make representations about its citizens living in Britain.

Molyneaux's proposal is based on treating Northern Catholics on a similar basis to the Glasgow, Liverpool or London Irish. In other words, as an ethnic group within the United Kingdom. The Anglo-Irish secretariat would be closed down and replaced by an Irish consulate in Belfast.

So far from bringing peace any nearer, Molyneaux's schemes would strengthen the status quo. In the words of Margaret Thatcher, they are based on treating Northern Ireland as if it "were as British as Finchley".

Molyneaux's aim is the re-establishment of a new legislative Assembly in Stormont. The SDLP would be given the chairs of various committee in proportion to their vote. Sinn Fein would, of course, be excluded. Co-operation with the South would revert to the area of economic matters as it was under the old Stormont regime.

So behind all the talks about talks, the objectives of the Unionist establishment have not changed. They want a Stormont type regime—with a few cosmetic changes—to place themselves at the centre of distributing the petty privileges of a sectarian state.

The game they are playing with Haughey is merely designed to make space for themselves and to appease elements of the British ruling class.

However, the game has already run into some difficulty. Paisley and the DUP have beaten the Orange drum to warn against any encounters with the Southern establishment. For years they have warned Protestant workers against the "Arch-Republican" Haughey. The tactical subtlety of seeming to dance to his tune does not go down well. DUP pressure is already forcing Molyneaux to back off.

These games between Northern Unionists and Haughey will go nowhere. In the meantime they hide the elementary truth about Northern Ireland: bigotry and discrimination against Northern Catholics will only be ended with the removal of the border.

Protest at youth cut

Women and children in Ballymurphy, have organised a street protest as a result of the £250,000 cut in the Youth Service Budget.

The cut will mean the loss of 10 youth training jobs in the poorest areas of Belfast.

These areas include Ballymurphy, Lower Fall, Woodvale and Shankill.

At least three youth clubs will be closed and a number of facilities for teenagers and children curtailed.

These cuts are just one aspect of the Tory attacks on working class life in the North.

